

Doc. 300.1.2

Higher Education Institution's Response

Date:

- **Higher Education Institution:**

**ALEXANDER COLLEGE LARNAKA
ALEXANDER COLLEGE PAFOS**

- **Town: LARNAKA / PAFOS**

- **Programme of study
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

ΠΡΟΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΑΣΤΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΕΚΜΑΘΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ
ΑΓΓΛΙΚΗΣ ΓΛΩΣΣΑΣ (1 Έτος)

In English:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE FOUNDATION (1 Year)

- **Language(s) of instruction: English**

- **Programme's status: New**

- **Concentrations (if any): N/A**

In Greek: N/A

In English: N/A



The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws” of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2nd column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*
 - *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report **without any interference** in the content.*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in *.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

Introduction: Alexander College and the Programme Team wish to thank the distinguished chair and the EEC members for their time, constructive feedback and recommendations. We are glad to see that the Programme is evaluated as compliant across all sections of quality standards. We have also thoroughly reviewed the EEC recommendations and we hereby provide evidence for actions taken in full compliance to the EEC suggestions. Summarising main issues:

- We confirm that Alexander College is currently a proud member of the British Council IELTS Partnership Programme offering a variety of resources, support and training for instructors and students (see Annexes 1 and 2).
- We have revised Module Descriptions (see Annex 4) based on recommendations enhancing grammar, cultural and intercultural awareness aspects, language use in digital contexts, differentiated language teaching instruction (also providing a course for instructors). We have also detailed assessment procedures, and clarified forms of continuous assessment. The Programme Team has expanded the description of learning strategies and study skills in all the courses. Extracurricular activities are introduced too.
- The Programme Team is fully supported in Academic Career Development and the core of the Team will be Full-Time employed. Further qualification development on an individual basis is also guaranteed. Classroom observation by peers and members of the Internal Quality is introduced. Students will be further supported through utilising the tools and resources offered by the Partnership Agreement with the British Council IELTS.

1. Study programme and study programme’s design and development

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Publicly available information concerning quality assurance should be more detailed (e.g. links to specific documents should be included on the website)	<p>In compliance to the recommendation, Alexander College further to existing information, makes publicly available the following Quality Assurance Documents which can be found at https://alexander.ac.cy/the-quality-assurance-system-at-the-alexander-college/ :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quality assurance policy ● Quality assurance system ● System and evaluation criteria of students ● Quality indicators for Programmes of Studies and their monitoring 	Choose level of compliance:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality assurance in relation to learning resources • Quality assurance and control of the learning process • Quality assurance and student resources • Policy and process of preventing and dealing with plagiarism • Student grievance procedures 	
Language learning strategies and study skills should be foreground in all the courses.	The Programme Team has expanded the description of learning strategies and study skills in all the courses (see Annex 4 Review of Modules)	Choose level of compliance:
The role of grammar should be given more emphasis in more modules, in particular with respect to using grammar structures in communication.	In compliance with the EEC recommendation, the Programme Team introduced to the content of the Modules and to expected learning outcomes, more clarity and emphasis to grammar structures in Communication (see Annex 4 Reviewed Modules 1, 2, 3, 4).	Choose level of compliance:
As cultural awareness is one of the objectives of the program, it should be made clear where and how it will be developed in the program.	In conformity with the EEC recommendation, the development of cultural sensitivity and cultural skills in classes will focus on discussions raising interest and awareness in cultural knowledge, cultural values and cultural behaviour, by overall using the English language as the medium of interaction for acquiring cultural skills. The treat of culture as a fifth language will -to the extent possible- facilitate or adapt to techniques for students to learn, understand and appreciate the values, practices and qualities of other cultures (see Annex 4 Reviewed Modules 1,2,4). This mindset involves understanding ways to use language as a means to accept difference and become more tolerant.	Choose level of compliance:
Some consideration should be given to extending the concept of cultural awareness to intercultural competence, which may be critical for functioning in international contexts	In continuation to the response in the previous box and in compliance to both, interrelated recommendations of the EEC, the following is here clarified: Alexander College and the Programme Team, in building a set of skills necessary for students to act in an intercultural	Choose level of compliance:

	<p>way in diverse environments, foster team learning activities and experiences of students from different backgrounds. These activities (role play, videos, discussions etc) will allow interaction with a degree of fluency with native speakers, value diversity, ensure equality, promote meaningful intercultural interaction, and more active citizenship and participation. The premises for these activities at CEFR Level B2 will allow students to be able to participate in complex discussions and negotiations with speakers of different cultures; adapt their communication style and strategies to effectively navigate intercultural conflicts. Aside from essential textbooks in place (approved by the EEC), shall consist of breaking down into activities the “Cultural Iceberg” and considering relevant resources (such as Intercultural competence manual for trainers https://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-04/COB%20IC%20Trainers%20Manual_FA_SMALL.pdf , https://www.idrinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/DMIS-IDRI.pdf)</p>	
<p>Integrated skills and language use in digital mediated contexts should be considered among learning outcomes.</p>	<p>In compliance to the recommendation (see Annex 4, Reviewed Modules, Module 1): In incorporating technology into language teaching, engagement is enhanced, and learning may take a more personalised form. The Programme team incorporates mobiles and tablets in the Modules for enhancing engagement and interactive learning and for continuous practice and enhancement of student autonomy. In class and out of class activities may include digital quizzes and polls, dictionary apps, photo-based activities etc. ChatGPT will also be used where students can partner to practise writing and communication skills in the context of text-based dialogues improving, therefore, their fluency and vocabulary. This tool allows for immediate feedback on</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>



	students' work. The Classroom Screen for management and engagement will also be used.	
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2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>We had the impression that the notion of differentiation was not fully understood during the online meeting. Perhaps differentiated language teaching instruction could be offered for in-service teaching training.</p>	<p>In compliance with the EEC recommendation, the Programme team has enrolled to the online Course 'TeachingEnglish: Inclusive classrooms' https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/training/teachingenglish-inclusive-classrooms. The short course is offered by the British Council in December 2023. The Programme Team acknowledges the need to transform classes to inclusive learning spaces. To achieve this target, instructors must first identify (the four main) barriers to learning and those learners likely at risk of exclusion and secondly address these obstacles with practical strategies based on different models of inclusion. Via inclusive teaching and learning, learners will experience an environment for differentiated learning to reduce obstacles to developing listening, speaking, reading and writing skills at CEFR B2 Level. The Programme Team, making use of Alexander College's recent British Council IELTS partnership, further explores all available options, resources and training for differentiated language teaching.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>Some of the assessment procedures lacked detailed descriptions and the content of the continuous in-class assessment is unclear at this point.</p>	<p>We have taken into account the suggestions on the assessment procedures. For each module, assessment is achieved through different forms evidenced in the Annex III of Reviewed Modules. Continuous in class assessment takes shapes in a variety of forms, further specified in Annex 4 Reviewed Modules.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>One member of staff does not have a teaching qualification but the years of teaching experience probably make up for this. The college might consider supporting the staff member in obtaining a diploma level qualification in English Language Teaching.</p>	<p>All teaching staff on the English Foundation programme have more than ten years of teaching experience. Their teaching experience expands to the various English language levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), and more specifically a B2 level.</p> <p>The teaching staff mentioned in the report has a BA English Language and Literature and an MA English Language and Literature. Further to her education background she teaches English for more than fifteen years at colleges, preparing mature students for international English exams such as Cambridge or IELTS for B1, B2 and C1 levels.</p> <p>Alexander College and the British Council signed a Partnership Programme agreement (Annex 1) and both students and staff will benefit from this agreement. The British Council will support Alexander College on the delivery of the English Foundation programme by providing resources to students and staff. All our teaching staff including the above mentioned colleague will participate in the various training sessions and activities of the British Council so that they maintain and even improve their teaching skills and at the same time remain well informed on changes and adjustments.</p> <p>Further to the above actions and in compliance to the relevant recommendation, the College has proposed to the teaching staff, and she has completed an application form to attend an MEd in TESOL degree offered by the International TEFL and TESOL Training.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>The teaching staff engages in professional development but we established some gaps in methodological knowledge in the online visit. The college should exploit the links to be established</p>	<p>Part of the agreement between Alexander College and British Council is free licences on Road to IELTS Institutional version - Anonymous, British Council's exclusive official online preparation course to be provided to school/institute for free. The anonymous access licences can be used from</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

<p>with the British Council for continued professional development</p>	<p>teachers in class (Annex 2 p.3). Also, (Annex 2 p.4) access is free to TeachingEnglish, LearnEnglish British Council's websites, the world largest collection of English language lesson plans activities, stories, articles, and teaching tools that can be found at these websites. Access to teacher development opportunities, publications, research, and networks is also available.</p>	
<p>Most lecturers are planned to be employed on hourly basis and the allocated teaching hours and length of contract will depend on the number of students. This creates a precarious situation for the lecturers as their employment condition is insecure. If the student numbers are steady, it is important that at least a core teaching staff receive a permanent contract. This ensures that the quality of teaching is maintained and students' feedback on the previous iteration of the course is acted upon.</p>	<p>Currently two of the teaching staff are employed full time. Once the programme is accredited by the CYQAA another two of the teaching staff will be employed full time. Full time status for the 80% of the teaching staff members will help the college to build a community of well-trained English language lecturers to support students through the various programmes delivered in English. Permanent teaching posts will benefit the college at various levels maintaining a very good reputation both of the proposed programme as well as the rest of the programmes.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>If lecturers are employed on more permanent contract, opportunities for promotion and further professional development should be considered.</p>	<p>Once the programme is accredited by the CYQAA and most of the teaching staff will have a permanent contract, they will be part of the rest of the teaching staff bodies. The college teaching staff (part-time status is included) has equal opportunities for further professional development and participation at the various staff bodies of the institution. All staff teaching on the English Foundation programme are considered part of the college teaching staff and they have all the rights as the rest of the teaching staff. See also Academic Career Development At Alexander College- Promotions at https://alexander.ac.cy/academic-career-development-at-alexander-college/</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>As teachers do not yet have a PhD and their contract does not involve research the teaching-research synergies cannot be maintained. If teachers have a more secure employment they should be encouraged to conduct smaller scale action research to enhance their teaching.</p>	<p>As stated in the previous boxes, all teaching focused and teaching-research pathways staff may fall under relevant sections of the Academic Career Development At Alexander College (see https://alexander.ac.cy/academic-career-development-at-alexander-college/)</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>Classroom observation by peers or members of the internal quality enhancement team might be used to</p>	<p>Alexander College members of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee will attend and observe classes and a</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>



give feedback on teacher performance.

report is circulated by the IQA staff to the Teaching staff. See Annex 3 of the relevant report sample used.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
None	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
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5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>The institution might want to consider getting the students involved in extracurricular activities, which will improve the students' communication skills and provide a good opportunity for practising the language. Some suggestions could be academic clubs, volunteering work in an English-speaking environment, cultural visits to performances in English or the students' own participation in English-speaking events held by the college.</p>	<p>The Programme Team agrees to the recommendation to add extracurricular activities as in other conventional programmes of study. Further to the above, Alexander College is mostly an English speaking academic community and student interaction adds to communication skills. The Student Union Alexander (SUAC) was established in 2016 and is an independent non-profit organisation. The Union consists of all the registered students who study at our college. Several events take place by the Union which include charities, parties, lectures, workshops, seminars, exciting activities, and clubs where members can participate and can include it in their CV. To run, each individual club must consist of at least 10 members each. All the clubs are being run through the Union Council. The available clubs are Basketball, Hiking, Literature Board Games, Art & Design and Photography. The college in collaboration with the student union organises an annual excursion during the spring semester and students and staff visit. During the spring semester 2023, students and staff visited the village of Omodos and attended wine tasting events at the various local wineries. Annually students and staff participate in the Larnaka Marathon in November. During Christmas time the student union participates at the various charity markets. Also, students are encouraged either to attend or even participate at the various lectures seminars and forums presented at the college.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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7. Eligibility (Joint programme)
 (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
N/A	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
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B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>The EEC concludes that the program under consideration has the potential to deliver quality education of the expected standards that overall complies with the standards of the CYQAA. The visit was well organised and the submitted documentation contained sufficient detail. It will be important that lecturers delivering the programme enhance students' learner autonomy and make use of opportunities for continuous professional development. Teaching quality can further be enhanced by peer observation and self-evaluation.</p>	<p>Alexander College and the Programme Team are thankful to the EEC and the CYQAA administration for the constructive assessment environment and recommendations.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
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C.

D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
ANDY LOPPAS	College Principal	
NICODEMOS LOIZOU	President of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee	
COSTAS CHRISTODOULIDES	Member of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee	
FADI HALABI	Member of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee	
ANTHONY CHABAREKH	Member of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee	
EVANGELOS EVANGELOU	Member of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee	

Date: 06/12/2023

